

Transcript of Oxford Times report on 'Model School'.

This article appeared in the Oxford Times in July 1970. The model was made by the boys after they had completed their exams and were effectively killing time until they finished school.

I know it was July, because I left school on about the 24 June, having a job to start on 30 June. I had already left when this appeared.

The boys in the picture are from left to right:

Malcolm Burr *{?Horton cum Studied*, Tim Lovegrove *{Horton}*, Steven Spinks *{Wheatley}*, Tim Swale *{Little Milton}*, Ian Dungey *{Wheatley}*, Ian Cambray (nick name Cammer) *{Littleworth}*, *{Garsington}*, Robert Weller (nick name Dobbut) *{Wheatley- Morland House}*

Of these I can remember that Steve and Ian went to Apprenticeships at British Leyland, Tim Swale went on to Lord Williams School. He subsequently went to New Zealand, but I think has now returned - his mum still lives in Little Milton.

Ian Cambray certainly has been an ambulance paramedic but was last heard of by me, running a fish and chip shop in Wells in Somerset. That was about 1996.

The text reads:

Pupils show off their 'model school'

I expected some changes when Shotover School at Wheatley became part of a comprehensive link-up, and Mrs Thatcher the new Tory Education Minister, will pardon the expression. But I never expected to see the old place shrink to a dozen feet long. With only a few days of term left, I suppose it won't matter too much. There's a lovely long holiday for things to get back to normal.

If you hadn't noticed the phenomena on your way past the building, don't worry. In fact it is a school within a school, made out of cardboard and a lot of unexpected materials as a project for the maths club.

Ron Green, head of the mathematics department, confesses: "I'm a bit of a fanatic about maths. I think it can be alive."

So at the end of the school year, when exams are over, he always encourages the fifth form lads who stay on to get busy on something enjoyable which indirectly teaches them a little more. One year they made maths aids like simple surveying instruments for the junior department. Another time they synchronised taped commentary with a series of trolly slides. After settling on a model of a school, they set forth with their tape measures and noted down all the distances, converted them to metres and scaled them down to a fiftieth of full size. Different parts of the school were left to different boys, so they had to take care to be accurate. If mistakes had been made, none of it would have fitted together. It took a month of spare moments and private study periods and Ron Green is pleased with what they were able to do in the time.

Now it's complete to the last detail, down to a knitting needle flag pole and a pile of coal waiting to be shovelled into the boilers. As the finishing touch, younger boys were persuaded to bring along their toy cars for the staff car park.

Ron Green is satisfied because they learnt about such things as a realisation of plans and metric conversion and the boys have the satisfaction of having wrestled successfully with some knotty problems.

Whenever difficulties over realism brought the building programme in the old table tennis table to a halt a conference was quickly organised to discuss remedies. Which is how they came to use matchsticks for kerb stones, glue and gravel for paths, emery paper for the roof, glued on sawdust soaked in green paint for the grass, and slivers of polythene bottles for glass domes.

Upstairs in the art room Mr Albert Sternberg encourages the same sort of use of imagination with a popular device that produces ever changing pop art designs. A back projector shines into a screen through a bottle of water into which drops of colour are squeezed. They spread and fuse to form random patterns.

As a refinement they try to control the design to match music from a tape recorder.

It's often left on for whole lessons, so the young painters can glance up and use it for inspiration. That's what I call shedding light upon the subject.